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THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY

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On February 13, at the meeting of the Massachusetts section of the New England Classical Association, Mr. John Tetlow, in a paper entitled The Vocabulary of High School Latin, criticised more or less severely the scheme proposed by me with regard to a definite requirement of approximately 2,000 words for entrance to college.

Mr. Tetlow formulated my position thus: (1) All Latin words have approximately exact English equivalents. (2) When these English equivalents have been mastered by the memory they can be applied to new passages of Latin and be made to yield sense. (3) In sight examination papers the English equivalents of all words not contained in the prescribed list of 2,000 words should be given in footnotes. (4) The most important factor in the attainment of ability to read Latin at sight is the mastery of the English equivalents of the Latin words most frequently met in reading. Mr. Tetlow proceeded to challenge all these propositions. I do not wonder at it; I should challenge them all myself.

In the course of his discussion Mr. Tetlow showed how the plan would work with the Harvard entrance examination in sight translation (advanced) of last year. He distributed copies of the paper, printed as follows, in which the words in italics are those which do not occur in my list of 2,000:

Vos, adulescentes, et qui nobiles estis, ad *maiorum* vestrorum *imitationem* excitabo, et qui ingenio ac virtute nobilitatem potestis consequi, ad eam rationem in qua multi homines novi et honore et gloria floruerunt, cohortabor. Haec est una via, mihi credite, et laudis et dignitatis et honoris: a bonis viris sapientibus et bene natura constitutis laudari et diligere, nosse *descriptionem* civitatis *maioribus* nostris sapientissime constitutam, qui cum regum potestatem non tulissent, ita magistratus annuos creaverunt, ut consilium senatus rei publicae praeponerent sempiternum, deligerentur autem in id consilium ab universo populo, aditusque in illum summum ordinem omnium civium *industriae* ac virtuti pateret; senatum rei publicae custodem, *praesidem*, *propugnatorem* conlocaverunt; huius ordinis auctoritate uti magistratus, et quasi *ministros* gravissimi consilii esse voluerunt; senatum autem ipsum, proximorum ordinum *splendorem* confirmare, plebis libertatem et commoda tueri atque augere voluerunt. Haec qui pro *virili* parte defendunt, *opimates* sunt, cuiuscumque sunt ordinis.—CICERO: *Pro Sestio*, 137, 138.

It is to be observed that of the eleven words in italics, two are *maiorum* and *maioribus*. The word

magnus occurs in High School Latin nearly 600 times and *maiores* in the sense of 'ancestors' occurs frequently and, of course, must have been treated by teacher and pupil, so that these two examples do not properly belong to the list of absent words. On the other hand, *annuos* and *praeponerent* should have been italicized, so that the number of words is not affected. Eleven out of one hundred and forty-five is only a little over seven per cent. My claim in my preface was that this list of 2,000 words would cover approximately nine-tenths of ordinary Latin. That is abundantly proven by this passage.

With most of the criticisms of Mr. Tetlow I am in hearty agreement. They are based, however, quite apart from the fact that his formulations as given above do not represent my views, upon the assumption that a teacher using my word-lists would use them without the judgment which every good teacher should exercise. Thus, the meanings attached to the words in the vocabulary must of necessity vary according to the context, and the selection of a word in English is often dependent upon the principles of English expression rather than Latin. This I have emphasized before more than once (*THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY*, 2. 25). Furthermore, "intelligent guessing" is indispensable and should be a part of training in word study. By intelligent guessing I mean the gathering of the meaning from the context. Derivation of words from stems already known is also an essential part of all language study, and that would have reduced the number of missing words in this examination paper still more.

Any scheme which is proposed as a substitute for our present system should be carefully studied and criticized before its adoption. It is much better to proceed slowly, ever, if some might regard the pace as too leisurely. So I welcome all trials of the "word-list", with a view to securing one ultimately on which we can all unite. Meanwhile, it is interesting to find the first test showing so conclusively the justness of my contention. G. L.

TRANSLATIONS OF THE CLASSICS AS AN AID TO CLASSICAL STUDY

To those who enjoyed the severe and splendid training of the old classical course of study a translation was an object strange, abhorrent, and im-